Poetry in Translation

Manuscript Translations of Italian Poetry, *c.*1650-1825: A Miscellany

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As far as can be ascertained, none of the historical translations gathered here have been printed before, whether in their own time or in some later context. I have compiled this selection of texts from extant manuscripts for their intrinsic interest and pleasure, but also to suggest how further archival research might make more visible the extensive history of amateur translation of classic and contemporary Italian poetry in English, and how far from routine its products can be. Such translations may also provide new insight into the historical reception of Italian literature among anglophone readers, as do some of these particular examples.

Some amateur translators dabble only very occasionally in the art, but others tackle sizeable works, or build up a corpus of material over time. Some occasional practitioners, especially youthful ones, acquire far more serious claims to the poet-translator's mantle as they grow older: what was the Alexander Pope of the early renderings of Ovid or Statius if not an amateur? Most of the translations represented here are the work of younger, though not juvenile, hands, but none, as it happens, went on to make much of a name as a translator. In fact, few of these writers have, or had in their own time, any standing as literary figures at all, a natural consequence of their productions escaping the printer's attentions. Yet although their work has not entered what we call the historical record, it is nevertheless part of the history of English literary translation.

Where the translator is a known individual, a headnote provides basic biographical information. It might be mentioned that some of these translators worked not from Italian alone, but a wider range of languages. The headings of the transcriptions are generally the translator's own. Scribal contractions are expanded, obvious errors are corrected, line numbering is normally added for longer items, and some limited adjustments are made to punctuation for the sake of clarity. On occasions when the Italian text is little known and not necessarily easy of access today, I have provided it alongside.

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Charles Bathurst: The Story of Count Ugolino from Dante

Inferno Cant. 33

1771

As a sustained handling of Dante in English, this arresting version of Dante's Ugolino narrative comes early in time. Although Dante's episode had been praised as 'truly pathetic' by Joseph Warton in his *Essay upon the Genius and Writings of Pope*, 1722, other references to it are not common as the English eighteenth century goes on. Thomas Gray produced a version of the same episode while studying Italian as an undergraduate around 1737, but this was never published, and is very different in style.[1]

The autograph notebook in which the poems and translations of Charles Bathurst (1754-1831) are recorded was acquired by the British Library in 1981 (as Add. MS 61910). He is known to history almost exclusively as a Member of Parliament, 1790-1823, and the very few publications with which his name is associated are works of a legal or political character.[2] This translation is precocious: according to Bathurst's dating it was done by the age of seventeen, whereas nearly all the other two dozen translations he saw fit to preserve in his notebook seem to belong to his twenties. Most of these are from Petrarch; a few are from Spanish or Latin. Other Italian examples appear below.

Now through the narrow opening of that Cell,
Where Famine long has dwelt, and yet shall dwell,
Full many a Noon[3]
When Heav'n at length inspired my boding Dream
Burst through the veil of dark Futurity,
And open'd all its Horrors to mine eye -
Methought this Tyrant, furious in the Chase,
Pursued the Wolf, and his devoted Race;

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[1] For a text see *Dante in English*, edited by Eric Griffiths and Matthew Reynolds (London, 2005), pp. 50-3.

[2] There are other Charles Bathursts of earlier and later dates with whom confusion should be avoided; one was a publisher whose initials appear on the editorial matter provided for printings of several classic English poets in the mid-nineteenth century. Our Charles Bathurst was known as Charles Bragge until he took his mother's maiden name as a condition of succeeding to the estate of her brother, his uncle, in 1804 (a common arrangement at this time).

[3] Line unfinished and incomplete.

To Lucca's tow'ring Mountain drove the Brood -
Lean were the hounds, and fam'd for deeds of blood.
There in the Van Gualandi rush'd along,
And Pisa's Nobles join'd th' impetuous throng:
Nor long the chase - the Savage soon was tir'd,)
He saw his foes with fiercer rage inspir'd,)
And 'mid his crying young in agony expir'd.)
I wak'd - it still was Night - and in their sleep
I heard, e'er yet I saw, my Children weep:
Four lovely Boys, who shar'd my Dungeon dread,
They wept - and weeping call'd on me for bread.
Think then what horrors taught my heart to bleed,
And if thou feel'st not, thine is hard indeed -
Think - and if e'er you wept at others' woe,
If thou hast tears, prepare to shed them now.
We rose, and now the promis'd hour drew nigh,
Our daily food accustom'd to supply:
Each sat, revolving in his pensive breast
The dreadfull Visions that disturb'd his rest;
When lo! the horrid Tow'r's wide Gate was barr'd.
Far from beneath the sounding bolt I heard;
And sudden, with excess of Grief amaz'd,
In speechless anguish on my Children gaz'd.
I could not weep - my Heart was turn'd to Stone:
They wept my Mis'ry, senseless of their own.
My youngest, my Anselmo, mark'd my woe;
"What ails my Father? look not on us so!"
I heard, yet answer'd not the gentle sound;
Still tearless pass'd the day, and, silent, night came round;
Nor mov'd I, till the rising Orb of Day
Pour'd on our dismal Cell a scanty ray;
Shew'd me the four sad faces pallid grown,
Once view'd with rapture, now too like my own:
Then, yielding to my Passion's strong commands,

In frantic rage I gnaw'd my clasped hands.
Struck with the horrid sight, my Children rose,
In eager haste to soothe their Father's woes;
They thought me with excess of hunger press'd,
Nor knew the pangs that labour'd in my breast.
"Let us," they cried, "your horrid feast supply,
"Our grief would lessen, if for you we die;
"You taught the wretched flesh we bear, to live;
"'Tis yours to take, as it was yours to give."
To ease their suff'rings, I repress'd my own;
And silent saw another Sun go down -
Another rose - another Night appear'd -
Nor yet a sigh, nor yet a groan was heard.
- O Earth, why op'd not then thy yawning Womb,
And sav'd the horrors of the days to come?
Then Gaddo, "O my Father, help me," cried;
Stretch'd at my feet his quiv'ring limbs, and died.
The rest I saw, wan as Thou seest their Sire,
Drop, one by one, and silently expire.
Then blind I stray'd o'er the polluted place,
Felt for some Traces of each lovely face:
For three long days still call'd on each dear Name,
Till Pain and Hunger wearied Grief o'ercame.

Sir James Turner: Petrarch, *Trionfo della morte* 1, conclusion, *c*.1670

Petrarch's *Trionfi* were first translated into English in 1554. Their interest endured, as this translation of the mid-seventeenth century testifies. James Turner (1615-*c*.1686) was a professional Scottish soldier, and a colourful figure. Educated at Glasgow University, a highpoint of his Brito-European adventures came at the Restoration of 1660, when Turner was knighted and successively promoted in command of the Royal troops in Scotland. In retirement he published on military subjects, but the manuscripts he left behind contain philosophical essays and biographies of historical figures: in fact the manuscript context of Turner's two translations from the *Trionfi* (the other not included here) is his translation of the account of Petrarch's coronation attributed to Sennuccio del Bene. Source: BL MS Add. 12067, fol. 261^{r-v}.

What griefe possest me, at that dismall time
Can never be expresd in prose or rime.
I saw her dy, in her I did espy
Vertue, Beautie, Curtesie all three dy.
And afterward,
Nor did she struggle painfullie with Death
Bot sweetlie parted with her vital breath,
Even like a fire, by force, which is not quenchd
Nor by its contrarie, cold water, stenchd,
Bot haveing burnt by peecmale all its strength
Dys of itselfe extinguished at length.
Or, like unto a lighted taper, when
It hath consumed its nourishing substance, then
Doth change its last, bot brightest glimpse of light
In sable Darknes, and obscurest Night.
Nor wax she pale, bot whiter than that snow
In a fair Mountaine, which no wind doth blow,
Bot calmlie fuffs itselfe in a faire heape,
So she, as onlie wearied, seemd to sleepe.
Nor was her purest spirit discomposd,
Bot peacefullie, when her eylids were closd,

Her spotles soule to heaven she did bequeath,
This change, the ignorant vulgar nickname Death.
If Death, then he his grinnes did forbeare,
For faire he did in her faire face appeare.

Charles Yorke: Tasso's Jerusalem (*Gerusalemme liberata*, VII.1-22), *c*. 1740

The copyist and owner of the manuscript album in which the text is apparently uniquely recorded (Brotherton MS LT 119), assigns this work to 'Mr C— Y—' and gives the date of copying as 1743. Other poems here confirm that 'C.Y.' is Charles Yorke (1722-1770), son of Philip Yorke, first earl of Hardwicke, who was lord chancellor 1737-56. Charles Yorke was from 1739 an undergraduate at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he embarked on a number of literary projects, sometimes in collaboration with his brother, before enrolling at Lincoln's Inn in 1742. He went on to become attorney-general in 1762. He seems never to have printed this or any of his other verse compositions. The others known from this manuscript collection are considerably less substantial than this item.

This episode in Tasso's epic was a very familiar one. The roll call of English poets who revisit it and rework it would naturally begin with Spenser, whose handling, close enough to be called a translation, is found in *The Faerie Queene*, Book 6, Canto 9.

1

Meanwhile affrighted thro' the Woody Maze,
Erminia flies, convey'd by faithfull Steed;
Her trembling hand no more her Will obeys,
Nor knows the rein which might command his Speed:
Thro' secret and unnumber'd paths he strays,
Taught by sagacious sense alone, to lead:
At length the Dame, not seen by adverse Eyes,
Escapes unharm'd the danger of Surprize.

2

As the staunch Hounds ashamed and breathless rove,
The track explor'd in vain and winding route,
When changing open Heath for Covert Grove,
The timid Beast eludes their warm pursuit;
The Christian Knights thus homeward sullen move;
Each blushed, Each jealous of his own repute:
Yet She ne'er looks behind, still winged by fear,
And thinks her eager foes are in the rear.

3

All night She wandered, and all day She fled,
Without a Guide, on flight uncertain bent,
Nothing She saw or heard, that might bestead,
Nought but Grief's Christal drops, and loud Lament:
But when the Sun descends to Ocean's Bed,
His Coursers in the Toil diurnal spent,
Where thro' glad vales the Sacred Jourdan flows,
She lights, lies down, inviting soft repose.

4

She fed on her Misfortunes, bitter food!
Tears only quench'd the thirst of this fair Maid;
But Sleep, the balm of Care, in gentle mood
To Rest her sorrows with her Senses laid;
And that no sound or thought too rough intrude,
His drowsy peacefull Wing, to shield her, spread:
Yet Love, whose forms within her fancy play,
Even in those moments bears the Sovereign Sway.

5

She waked not, 'till of Birds the Mattin sound,
Which glads the Whispering trees, her Ears regale;
The Waters o'er the rattling pebbles bound;
Winds curl the Waves, and flow'ry Scents exhale:
She lifts her languid Eyes, and views around,
The Huts of Shepherds scatter'd in the Vale;
But Winds, and Trees, and Waters murm'ring fall,
Again her Sighs, again her Tears recall.

6

While to herself She moans her dolorous case,
Sudden her plaints are broken by the notes

Of oaten Reeds, well piped with rural grace;
Thro' air conveyed the trembling music floats:
She leaves her Mossy Couch with solemn pace,
And sees an aged Swain who tends his Goats,
Weaves Osier Baskets, and the Shade enjoys,
Listening the Carols of three beauteous Boys.

7

These, at the Dame's unlook'd approach awhile
The glittering arms with wild amaze behold,
But soon Erminia chears them with a Smile,
Her radiant Eyes unveil'd and Locks of Gold:
"Pursue, she said, the tasks your hours beguile,
You whom the Heavens have cast in a happier mould;
Fear not; my warlike Arms portend no wrongs,
To rustic Labours, or enlivening Songs.

8

Whence comes it, Father, that in this sojourn
From Ruffian insult safe, or panic fear,
Now o'er the Land War's flames wide-spreading burn,
Your fields alone the hands of Rapine spare?"
"Son," answered he, "from outrage and rude scorn,
My little family and fleecy care,
Unhurt remain; ne'er did War's angry threat
Invade the shelter of our hush'd retreat.

9

Whether the Guardian pow'rs of Heaven secure
The harmless Swain, with grandeur not elate;
Or as tall Oaks the Ligh'nings fork allure,
Which shuns the lowly Shrub's contemn'd estate,
So Haughty Kings the hostile stroke endure,
And foreign swords disturb th' unpity'd great;

Nor can the greedy Soldier's appetite
Our vile neglected poverty invite:

10

To others vile; to me it wears such grace,
Nor wealth nor scepter worth my Envy seem;
O ne'er may restless thoughts this calm deface,
The lust of Lucre, or Ambition's dream:
I dread no poison lurks in golden Vase,
But quaff to ease my thirst the purling Stream.
My well stock'd Orchard and my Flock supply,
Plenty unbought, a frugal Luxury.

11

Few are our Wants, and the materials few,
Whence weary Nature's kind supports are drawn;
No Servants tend my folds, but these you view,
My Sons, whose years just gleam with Reason's dawn.
Nor wants my Solitude amusements too;
T' observe the Deer, light bounding o'er the Lawn;
The Scaly race, people the current near;
Birds, while they sing, their pinions poise in air.

12

In early prime me vainer wishes fired
(Then most are caught with eager Love of praise)
I nor the rural Cares nor Sports admired,
And scorned in native farm to spend my days;
In Memphis' Royal palace I aspired,
Among the Slaves enrolled, myself to raise:
And tho' the Gardens were my humble part,
I knew the false dissembling Courtier art.

13

Long sooth'd by hopes, oft failing, oft renew'd,
I felt the Galling Spurn, by fortune crost;
But when decay of Strength and Age I rued,
Vanish'd aspiring thoughts and youthfull boast:
Strict longings for a meaner Life ensued,
Sighs for my former peace and freedom lost;
Farewell ye Courts, I said, on forests bent,
And from their happy Converse learned Content."

14

While thus the Swain discoursed, his gentle Guest
Hung on his Lips; the soothing words persuade:
On her affections his wise Laws impressed,
The stirring Tempest of her Soul allayed.
One thought then fixed her agitated breast,
Hid in this dark and unfrequented Shade,
To make a Chearfull, yet a Lone sojourn,
Till fortune grant the means of her return.

15

She utters her request in Winning Words;
"In Youth you bent beneath ill fortune's frown;
Relenting Heaven in Age its grace accords,
And dictates pity to the Wretch unknown.
Whate'er this hospitable Cot affords,
Shall please a mind, with grief familiar grown;
To silent Trees my passion I'll relate,
And from my heart discharge the lab'ring Weight.

16

If Gold, or Gems, which envying Crouds adore,
Had in your generous Soul false Wonders wrought;
You might (such plenty have I yet in Store)
Compleat the largest measure of your thought."

Down her face the pearly dews now pour,
With which her Eyes were filled, as she besought,
Then to recite her Woes in part began;
She wept; Tears followed from the good old Man:

17

Who aims to calm her in the dubious Strife,
As for her bliss he felt a father's Zeal;
And next conducts her to his aged Wife,
Of temper like, the heart distressed to heal:
For Rural fare the Dame a Royal Life
Foregoes, her Tresses tyed in coarsest Veil:
But by her polished air and stately tread,
No Shepherdess (I ween) in Woodlands bred.

18

Her home-spun garb hid not her Eyes' fair Light,
What Awe commands, or what Love's cause befriends;
The princely Majesty that shone so bright
To humblest deeds peculiar beauty lends:
By day She ranges with the Goats, at night
With Sylvan Crook to every fold attends:
From the full teat its milky store she drain'd,
And press'd the Snowy curd with skilfull hand.

19

Oft, as protected from the noonday Heat,
Her wanton flocks in Cooling Shades reclin'd,
The Name most honour'd in devices neat,
She grav'd on beeches and the laurel's rind;
Teaching the Wounded trees her Loves repeat,
Unprosper'd loves, the Anguish of her mind:
And as the darling Letters she review'd,
The graceful Tears her tender Cheecks bedew'd.

20

Then loud-complaining cryed, “ye friendly plants,
On your fair rind preserve the moving tale;
The time shall come, when to your leafy haunts
The faithfull solitary Swain may steal,
Who will not read my Woes with scornful taunts,
But in his Breast the pangs of pity feel:
And say, ‘Ah Love! Cruel was thy reward,
To her whose truth these mournfull Groves record.’

21

Perhaps, if Heaven this favour will enhance,
Or grant one Wish which in my Bosom glows,
Here may he roam, Led by propitious Chance,
Who nor my love regards, nor sorrow knows;
Yet when his Eyes on the rais’d Turf he glance,
Where my frail weary Body shall repose,
Just to my Wrongs his Course let him delay,
Of Sighs and melting Tears the tribute pay.

22

Wretched in Life, tho’ grief each hour employs,
Of bliss my Soul in Death shall taste a share;
My ashes in his friendship’s flame rejoice,
Now the dear object of my fond despair.”
Thus to deaf trees she vents her plaintive Voice,
Her streaming Eyes bespoke distressful Care:
Tancred mean-while, far from Erminia’s side,
To seek her rov’d, and chance his doubtful guide.

Tasso, *Aminta*, 2.1.1-27

Tasso's pastoral drama of 1573 lacks a classic English translation. John Dancer's of 1660 introduces *Aminta* as 'a Piece Valued by the most Refined Judgements above all [Tasso's] other *Poems*', but Dancer's work is no masterpiece. Other English treatments of this particular passage include Anne Finch's of lines 1-10, 'Tho' we, of small Proportion see', 1713. This Italian text is taken from *L'Aminta, di Torquato Tasso ...* in *Italian* and *English*, second edition (Oxford, ?1730).

Picciola è l'Ape, e fà colpicciol morso
Pur gravi, e pur moleste le ferite;
Mà, qual cosa e più picciola d' Amore
Se in ogni breve spatio entra, e s'asconde
In ogni breve spatio? hor, sotto à l'ombra
De le palpebre, hor trà minuti rivi
D'un biondo crine, hor dentro le pozzette,
Che forma un dolce riso in bella guancia;
E pur fà tanto grandi, e si mortali,
E così immedicabili le piaghe.
Ohime, che tutte piaga, e tutte sangue
Son le viscere mie; e mille spiedi
Hà ne gli occhi di Silvia il crudo Amore.
Crudel Amor, Silvia crudele, ed empia
Più che le Selve. O' come à te confassi
Tal nome: e quanto vide chi te'l pose.
Celan le Selve Angui, Leoni, ed Orsi
Dentro il lor verde; tu dentro al bel petto,
Nascondi odio, disdegno, ed impietate,
Fere peggior ch' Angui, Leoni, ed Orsi:
Che si placano quei, questi placarsi
Non possono per prego, nè per dono.
Ohime, quando ti porto i fior novelli,
Tu li ricusi, ritrosetta; forse,
Perche fior via più belli hai nel bel volto.
Ohime, quando io ti porgo i vaghi pomi,
Tu li rifiuti, disdegnosa; forse
Perche pomi più vaghi hai nel bel seno.

Henry Richard Fox: From the Aminta of Tasso (*c*. 1793)

Henry Richard Fox, third baron Holland (1773–1840), politician and man of letters, was in his early twenties when he wrote the substantial translations (mainly from Ovid)[4] included in multiple sets of scribal copies in the British Library. Holland's later published works rather sporadically incorporate some of these alongside other translations and imitations: English versions of three Spanish comedies (1807), imitations of Juvenal (privately printed 1795-6), two other short renderings of Ariosto (1823).

Source: BL MS Add 51441, fol. 107^{r-v}.

Small is the Bee, yet, with tormenting pain,
Can fire each aching nerve, each swelling vein.
But what is smaller than intruding Love?
He enters every where, delights to rove
In paths invisible to mortal eye.
In the smooth eyelid now delights to lye,
Now all his stratagems of war prepare,
Hid in the ambush of the flowing hair,
Or from the dimple of the laughing cheek,
On some fond heart his fatal vengeance wreak.
I am all wounds, I feel Love's poison'd dart
Has reach'd the deep recesses of my heart:
For Sylvia, cruel nymph, to Love supplies
A thousand darts from her relentless eyes.
Ah! cruel Love, ah Sylvia, cruel maid!
More cruel than the Forest's lofty shade,
Tho' that conceals the Lion, Snake, and Bear,
How can such Monsters raise distrust and fear
Like those which you in your white breast contain -
Deep hate, forbidding pride, and cold disdain.
With scorn you spurn the proffer'd rose I bring,
The ruddy infant of the opening spring,
Perhaps its crimson hue is dead and faint,
Because your cheeks more beauteous colours paint.
The apples I present, you cast away,
Because your breasts are hard, and round as they.

[4] Texts of several of the previously unprinted Ovid translations are given in *Newly Recovered English Classical Translations, 1600-1800*, edited by Stuart Gillespie (Oxford, 2018).

Jonathan Sidnam: Guarini, *Il Pastor fido*, from Act 1, Scene 4 (1630)

Little is known of Sidnam, whose translation of Guarini's pastoral drama was the second of three early English attempts on this most fashionable of Renaissance plays. It is more successful than the first (by Talboys(?) Dymock, edited by Elizabeth Story Donno, 1993), but the third, Sir Richard Fanshawe's classic version of 1647, proved definitive. Though occasionally praised by modern scholars, not a line of Sidnam's translation seems ever to have been printed, so that this and the following excerpt will at least provide samples.

This *carpe diem* passage, sometimes known as 'The Virgin and the Rose', was regularly translated as an independent piece long after the mid-seventeenth century. Source: BL MS Add. 29493, fols 13^{r}-14^{v}.

As a sweete Rose in a rich garden plac't
Which whilst the shaddowe of the night's black veyle
Covers the earth, remaines lockt upp from sight,
Undrest, enclos'd within those tender sproutes
And those greene leaves, which seeme to lodge it safe
As in the bedd of nature,
When the first beames which spring out of the East
Beginn to shine upon yt, seemes to wake,
And open that sweete crimson bosome wide
Unto the Sunn, which wooes yt with his heate,
And seemes delighted with soe faire a flower,
For that the Bee which murmuring flies
From plant to plant
Hastens to suck that odoriferous juyce
Which riseth with the morning dew.
But yf yt be not gatherd ere the heate
And scorching flames of the fierce middaie come,
It falleth with the falling of the Sunn,
Soe pale disfigured that scarce man knowes
Whether yt may be saide this was a Rose.
Soe Virgine Maides, whil'st the sage mother's care
Keeps them lockt upp, like jewels in a caske,
Shutt upp their harts and themselves, and keepe them clos'd
Against all Love's assaults.
But yf the wanton glances of an amorous eye
Once shine uppon them, or a Sigh
Pierce but their eares, then straight the hart lies ope,
Love enters in, and yf shame for a time
Conceale yt, or feare keepe yt close,
The woefull soule in silence spendes her strength,
Longing desires consume her spirritts soe
That all her beautie fades, the season past
Brings sadnesse first, and then despaire at last.

Jonathan Sidnam: Guarini, from *Il Pastor fido*, from Act 1, Chorus (1630)

This passage is an example of the high-flown and sententious choruses with which Guarini concludes each of his play's five acts. The second half of this chorus, omitted here, moves on to specific reference to the action of the play. Source: BL MS Add. 29493, fol. 16^{r-v}.

O thou all powerfull Law, first writt,
Or rather bound, in Jove's high brest
Whose gentle, sweet, and loveing force
Inclines the hartes and bendes the will
Of things created to that good
Which felt, yet is not understood;
And dost not onelie rule the fraile
Outside, where sence can scarce perceive
That newlie borne it dies again,
And varies, as the houres doe chandge,
But guid'st withall, those hidden seedes
Of reason, which all else exceedes:
If this great world be great with childe
And bring forth beauties wonderfull;
If whatsoere betweene the Sunn
And the vast concave of the Moone
Partake that spiritt which doth give
Forme to the world and make it live;
And yf from thence all humane seed
Take yts first being, yf the Plantes
And beastes have life, the earth bedecks
With flowrie tresses, or be child
With winters frostes, yet everie thing
Proceedes from thine Eternall spring.
Nor this alone, but whatsoere
Delightfull hope poore mortalls feele
All fortune either good or ill
Which crosse or pleasing starrs ordaine,
From whence fraile man receives the tie
When to be borne, and when to die.
What ere makes quiett or can calme
The troubled passions of the minde;
What ever fortune seemes to give,
Or take awaie, and what the world
Would have ascrib'd to it alone,
Springs from the fountaine of thy love
And is derived from above.

Girolamo Preti: ‘Rovine di Roma Antica’

Preti’s sonnet appeared in 1644, and could not be described as well known in any period. It is one of dozens of Renaissance poems in a range of European languages which belong to a tradition deriving from a famous epigram by Janus Vitalis observing that Rome can no longer be found in Rome because the great city is now only ruins. Texts of many responses to Vitalis’ epigram and to Du Bellay’s poem inspired by it are given in two recent publications.[5]

Qui fu quella d’imperio antica Sede,
Temuta in pace, e trionfante in guerra.
Fu: perch’altro, che il loco hor non si vede.
Quella, che Roma fu, giace sotterra.
Queste, cui l’herba copre, e calca il piede,
Fur Moli al Ciel vicine, ed hor son terra.
Roma, ch’il mondo vinse, al Tempo cede,
Che i piani inalza, e che l’altezze atterra.
Roma in Roma non è. Vulcano, e Marte
La grandezza di Roma a Roma han tolta,
Struggendo l’opre a di Natura, e d’Arte.
Voltò sossopra il Mondo, e’n polve è volta;
E tra queste ruine a terra sparte
In sè stessa cadeo morta, e sepolta.

[5] Both are by Malcolm Smith: ‘Looking for Rome in Rome: Janus Vitalis and his disciples’, *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 51 (1977), 510-27; ‘Janus Vitalis Revisited’, *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 63 (1989), 69-75.

Charles Bathurst: From a Sonnet of Girolamo Preti

1773

English translations of short poems by Preti appear in collections infrequently in the eighteenth century. No other English version of this one is in evidence by 1800. For Bathurst's manuscript poetry notebook see the first item above.

Here stood that Seat of Empire fam'd afar,
Dreaded in Peace, with Trophies crown'd in War,
Here *stood*; for now the place alone remains,
What once was Rome lies buried in these plains.
These massy fragments, where the wild Grass spreads,
By footsteps worn, once rear'd to Heav'n their heads,
And now are Earth - The World's great Sov'reign, Rome,
Falls, by the conquering hand of Time o'ercome.
Rome is no longer Rome - Lo! side by side
Vulcan and Mars tear down her boasted pride,
Before them Art's and Nature's works decay.
- The world at length o'erturn'd beneath her sway,
She sinks to dust, and 'mid these heaps o'erthrown,
Lies in the Ruins buried and unknown.

Charles Bathurst: From Madonna Zappi
1783

Faustina Maratti (*c*.1670-1745), natural daughter of the painter Carlo Maratti, was renowned for beauty and virtue as well as for her verse. She married the admired lawyer and poet Felici Zappi, with whom she published joint poetry collections which were reprinted well into the nineteenth century, and familiar abroad. This sonnet had attracted at least one previous English translator, Francis Fawkes, whose version can be found in *The Poetical Calendar*, Vol. 7 (1763-4), p. 80.

Donna, che tanto al mio bel soll piacesti,
Che ancor de' pregi tuoi parla sorente,
Lodando ora il bel crine, ora il ridente
Tuo labbro, ed ora i saggi detti onesti,
Dimmi, quando le voci a lui volgesti,
Tacque egli'mai, qual'uom, che nulla pente?
O le turbate luci alteramente
(Come a me volge) a te volger vedesti?
De' tuoi bei lumi alle due chiare faci
Io so, ch' egli arse un tempo, o so, che allora …
Ma tu declini al suol gli occhi vivaci.
Veggo il rossor, che le tue guance infiora;
Parla, rispondi: ah non risponder! taci:
Taci, se mi vuol dir, ch'ei t'ama ancora.

Sweet Maid, to my Castalio once so dear
That still he loves to dwell upon the thought,
Oft praising your sweet smile, your flowing hair,
And converse pure with sage reflexion fraught,
Say, when your voice addressed him, did he e'er
Muse in sad silence like a Man distraught?
Or did such scorn his troubled looks declare,
As I experience now, when thee they sought?
I know there was a time when he admir'd
Your dazzling beauties, and then too I know -
But bent to earth your speaking Eyes decline,
I see your cheek with starting blushes fir'd:
Say - tell me - no - reply not - speak not - no;
Be dumb, nor tell me that he still is thine.

Charles Bathurst: Sonnet of Manfredi
on his going to Rome to see Faustina Zappi

Evidently this translation goes with the last, and with the special appeal of sonnets for Bathurst. Eustachio Manfredi (1674-1739) was from Bologna.

Per Faustina Maratti Zappi
celebratissima poetessa;
e tra gli Arcadi Aglauro Cidonia.
SONETTO

Pur con questi occhi alfin visto ho l'altero
Miracol di belezza e d'onestate,
Cui sol per adombrar, mille fiate
Oltr'Arno ed Appennin spinto ho il pensiero.
E pur con queste orecchie udito ho il vero
Pregio, e il vivo stupor di nostra etate:
Or gli uni e l'altre omai paghi e beate
Chiudansi pur, ch'altro da lor non chero.
Nè tu i gran templi, e i simulacri tuoi
Vantarmi intatti ancor dal tempo edace,
Ne l'ampie spoglie de la terra doma;
Chè gloria antica, o nuova altra non puoi
Mostar pari a costei, sia con tua pace,
Bella, invitta, superba, augusta Roma.

Yes - with these eyes I have beheld at last
Of Beauty and of Worth the form divine;
For which so oft in Fancy I have past
Arno's fair stream, and travers'd Appennine.
These ears have heard the wisdom, that surpast
All that our age's Talents could combine -
Satiate and full henceforth each Sense may fast;
I close them here, and all their use resign.
Nor Thou thy Temples boast, and sculptur'd stone,
Still safe from Time's destruction and decay,
Nor spoils thy Heroes brought in triumph home;
For Thou hast nought of old, or new, renown
Whose glory equals Hers - Vaunt as you may,
Fair, proud, invincible, majestic, Rome!

Anon.: Metastasio, ‘La partenza’, from *Canzonetta a Nicè*

Metastasio’s music was the key to the success of this famous lyric of 1749. It is a simple minuet in 3/4 time which well suits the verse, and became such a classic that even Mozart and Beethoven began their versions of ‘La partenza’ with melodies related to Metastasio’s by then traditional setting. The translation is found in the papers, and in the hand, of Henry Home, *c*.1765 (BL Add 46035, fol. 58^{r-v}), but he has copied it out for a correspondent, and cannot be securely identified as the translator. Previous translators had covered some of Metastasio’s arias, with Samuel Humphreys publishing a collection of his, but so famous a song is never unlikely to attract further attempts.

1

Ecco quel fiero istante:
Nicè, mia Nicè, addio.
Come vivrò ben mio,
Così lontan da te?
Io vivrò sempre in pene,
Io non avrò più bene:
E tu, chi sa se mai
Ti sovverrai di me!

2

Soffri che in traccia almeno
Di mia perduta pace
Venga il pensier seguace
Sull' orme del tuo piè.
Sempre nel tuo cammino,
Sempre m' avrai vicino;
E tu, chi sa se mai
Ti sovverai di me!

3

Io rivedrò sovente
Le amene piagge, o Nice,
Dove vivea felice,
Quando vivea con te.
A me saran tormento
Cento memorie e cento:
E tu, chi sa se mai
Ti sovverrai di me!

1

Behold the fatal hour arrive
Nicé, my Nicé, ah farewell,
Sever’d from thee can I survive,
From thee whom I have lov’d so well?
Endlesse and deep will be my woe,
No ray of comfort shall I see;
And yet who knows, alas, who knows
If thou wilt e’er remember me.

2

Permit me, while in eager chace
Of lost tranquility I rove,
Permit my restless thought to trace
The footsteps of my absent love:
Of Nicé wheresoe’r she goes
The fond attendant I shall be;
And yet who knows, alas, who knows,
If she will e’er remember me.

3

Oft times shall I to meads and bowers,
To groves, my former haunts, repair;
Delightful haunts, where once my hours
Glided in joy, for thou went there!
Painful remembrance oft shall dwell
On scenes of pleasure, which with thee
Quick past - yet who, alas, can tell
If thou wilt e’er remember me.

4

Ecco, dirò, quel fonte,
Dove avvampò di sdegno;
Ma poi di pace in pegno
La bella man mi diè.
Quì si vivea di speme:
Là si languiva insieme;
E tu, chi sa se mai
Ti sovverrai di me!

5

Quanti vedrai giungendo
Al nuovo tuo soggiorno,
Quanti venirti intorno
À offrirti amore, e fé!
Oh Dio! chi sa fra tanti
Teneri omaggi e pianti,
Oh Dio! chi sa se mai
Ti sovverrai di me!

6

Pensa qual dolce strale,
Cara, mi lasci in seno:
Pensa che amò Fileno
Senza sperar mercè:
Pensa, mia vita, a questo
Barbaro addio funesto:
Pensa ... Ah chi sa se mai
Ti sovverrai di me!

4

There flows the fountain, shall I cry,
Where blushing scornful she would stand,
Then look with softly-pitying Eye
And let me seize her yielding hand;
There dawn'd my hope, there first the vows
Were heard of mutual constancy:
And yet who knows, alas! who knows
If she will e'er remember me.

5

How many youths shalt thou behold
Around thy new abode repair,
What tales of love shall there be told,
What vows of truth be utter'd there:
Oh heavens! amid so tender vows
Such soothing tales, if I might be -
Oh heavens! and yet, alas, who knows
If thou wilt e'er remember me.

6

O think what sweet tormenting smart
Thy poor forlorn Fileno proves,
O think how faithful is his heart,
Who has no hope yet hopeless loves:
Think on the silent sad farewell
Of him divided far from thee:
O think - yet who alas can tell
If thou wilt e'er remember me.

Henry Richard Fox: Imitation of Metastasio. Florence Sept. 1794.

To Woman

The popularity of Italian opera in the eighteenth century ensured frequent amateur translations of particulary admired arias (‘professionals’ tended to tackle whole operas). Whereas today opera translations are sometimes used for purposes of performance, this can be seen not to be the aim of earlier translations by their lack of interest in creating texts that will fit the same music.

For Fox (Lord Holland) see above. Source: BL MS Add. 51903, fols 54-5.

If customs, Laws, or partial natures plan
Too harsh subjects you to the will of Man,
Yet cease, ye fair tyrants, to complain:
Subdued ye triumph, and tho’ slaves ye reign.
’Tis time to Man’s superior sex ye yield,
In thought, in act, in councils in the field.
Yet what is strength of mind, or force of arms,
Compared with female smiles and beauties charms?
’Tis ours, by reason and by force combined,
To guide, enlighten, and instruct mankind;
’Tis yours, by beauties all-resistless charm,
To blind that reason, and that force disarm.

Charles Bathurst: Carlo Beolchi, 'Genova mia'

As a young man the Piedmontese democrat Beolchi (1796-1867) fought in Catalonia. By 1825 he had established himself in London, where he wrote on Italian poetry and was eventually offered the Chair in Italian at King's College. Attempts have been made recently to rescue him from obscurity: an edited work, *Carlo Beolchi: Patriota, giornalista e deputato aronese*, was published in 2018. Beolchi's sonnet (?1825) is the only contemporary Italian poem included among Charles Bathurst's translations, allowing this gathering to conclude with the early years of the Risorgimento.

Genova mia, se con ascuitto ciglio
Piagato e guasto il tuo bel corpo io miro
Non è poca pietà d'ingrato figlio,
Ma rubelle mi sembra ogni sospiro.
La maestà di tue ruine ammiro,
Trofei della costanza e del consiglio:
E ovunque volgo il passo, e il guardo giro,
Incontro il tuo valor nel tuo periglio.
Più val d'ogni vittoria un bell soffrire!
E contra gli osti la vendetta fai
Col vederti distrutta a nol sentire:
Anzi girar la Libertà mirai
E baciar lieta ogni ruina e dire:
Ruine sì ma servitù non mai!

O my dear Country! if without a tear
Mangled and torn thy beauties I descry,
Charge not thy Son with patriot apathy
For treason to thy fame my sighs appear.
The grandeur of thy ruins I revere,
Trophies of Honour and of Constancy;
Where'er I bend my step or turn mine eye
I trace thy valour in thy doom severe.
E'en Conquest to heroic suffering yields,
And on thy foes this vengeance thou hast tried:
To know, yet scorn to feel, thy Misery.
I mark'd where Freedom trod thy ravag'd fields,
She kissed each relick, and exulting cried
"Ruin be mine, but never Slavery."